

# Trends in the diversity of teachers in England<sup>†</sup>

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Teaching is a female dominated occupation across the OECD. While men have, historically, been overrepresented in senior positions, the school workforce in England is no different. The latest data shows that the school workforce is becoming even more female dominated. The proportion of men in secondary schools has fallen year on year since 2010 (to 37.1 per cent) and has stagnated in primary schools over the last five years (to 15.4 per cent).

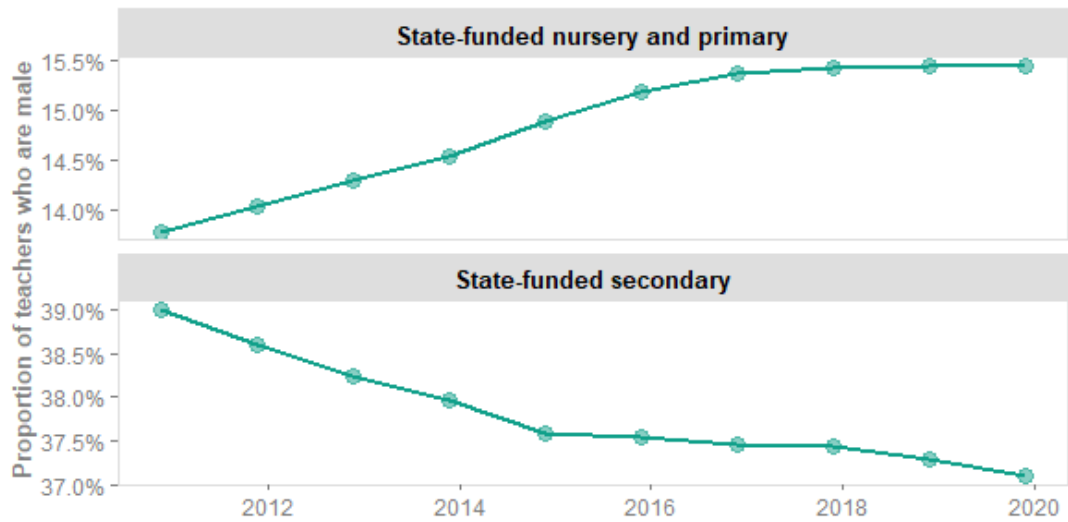
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<sup>†</sup>This analysis was published by the Education Policy Institute on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2020. Source: <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/diversity-of-teachers/> see Fullard (2020b)

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## Gender diversity in schools

Gender diversity has fallen in secondary schools and stagnated in primary schools

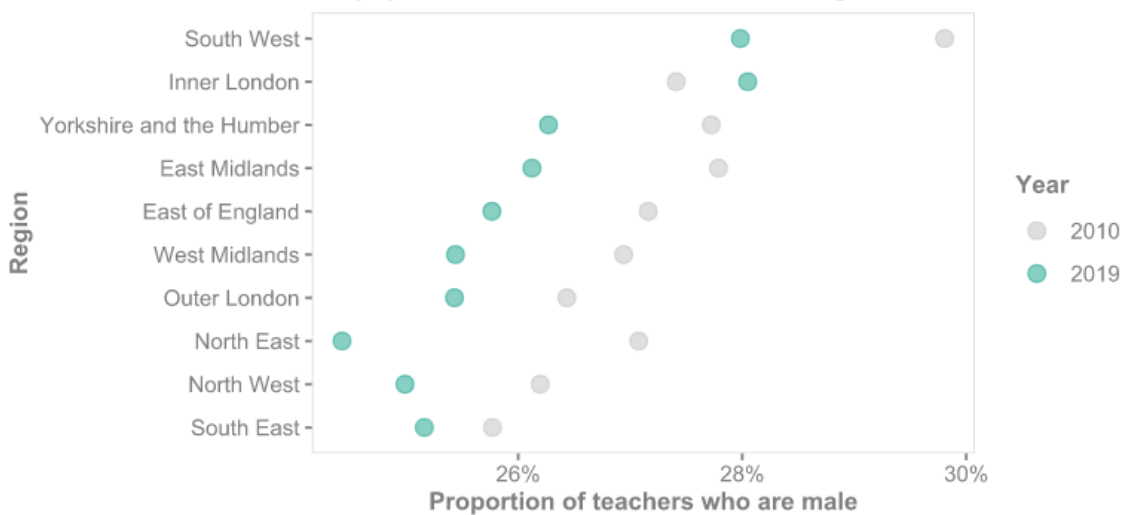


Source: School workforce census 2010-2019

The decline in the proportion of men in the school workforce has occurred across most of the country. Since 2010, every region in England has seen a decline apart from Inner London.

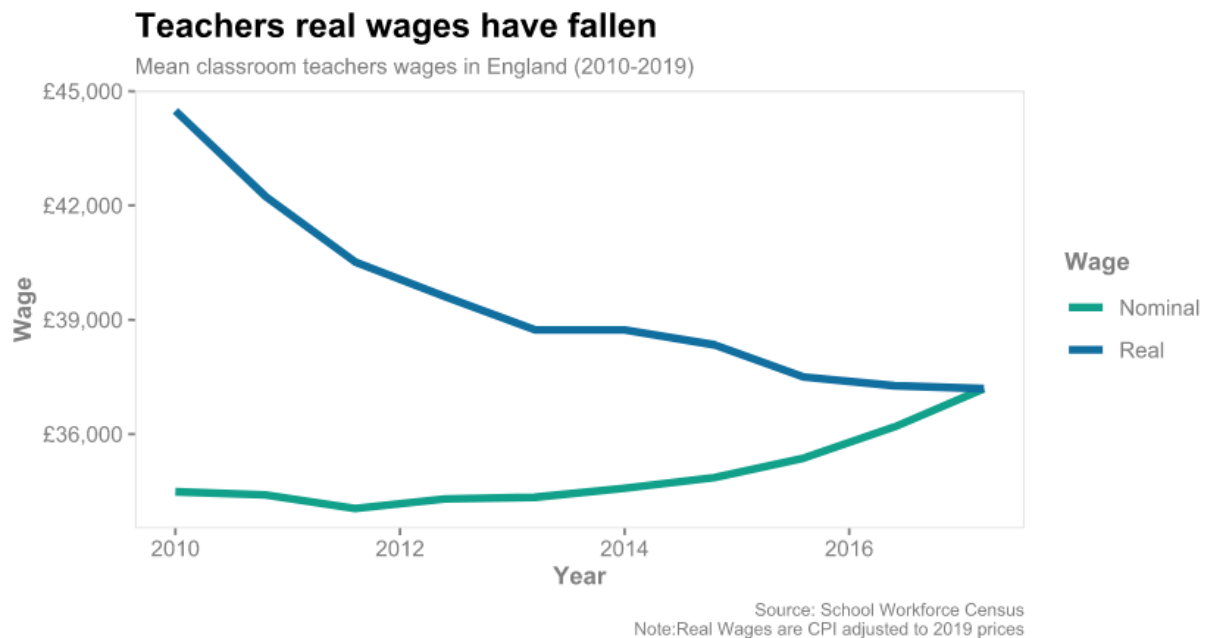
## Where are there fewer men?

The proportion of male teachers has fallen across England



Source: School Workforce Census  
Note: Regions are ordered by the average proportion of male teachers between 2010-2019 (descending)

This decline is likely to be caused by the public sector pay freeze as evidence from the UK shows that men's decision to go into teaching tends to be more responsive to wages than females (Dolton et al., 2003). Since 2010 teachers' wages have largely stagnated and, despite the recent uptick, fallen in real terms by 9.7 per cent.

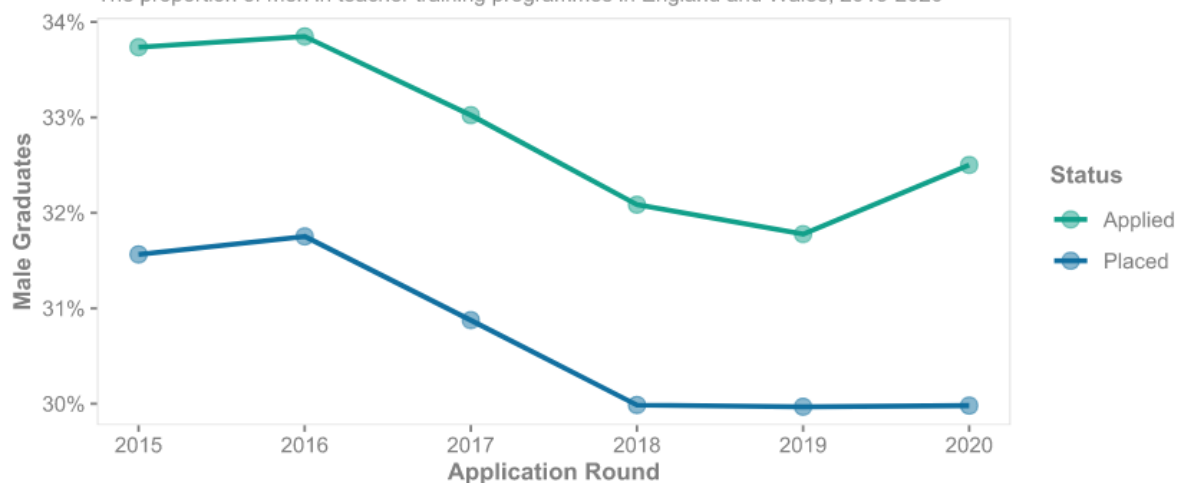


While the Covid-19 induced surge in applications for teacher training programmes has increased the number of male applicants since March, up 2,660 (37 per cent) compared to the same period last year, this boost is unlikely to have a significant effect on the gender diversity of entrants as an additional 4,700 female applicants (up 36 per cent) have also applied (Fullard 2020a).

Furthermore, male applicants have disproportionately applied to teaching later in the round (40 per cent of applicants in September and August were male compared to 28 per cent in November and December) so they are less likely to find a place as many positions have already been filled. Indeed, the proportion of male graduates who have been successfully placed on a training programme is almost identical to previous years despite a slight uptick in the proportion of applicants.

## The proportion of men going into teaching

The proportion of men in teacher training programmes in England and Wales, 2015-2020



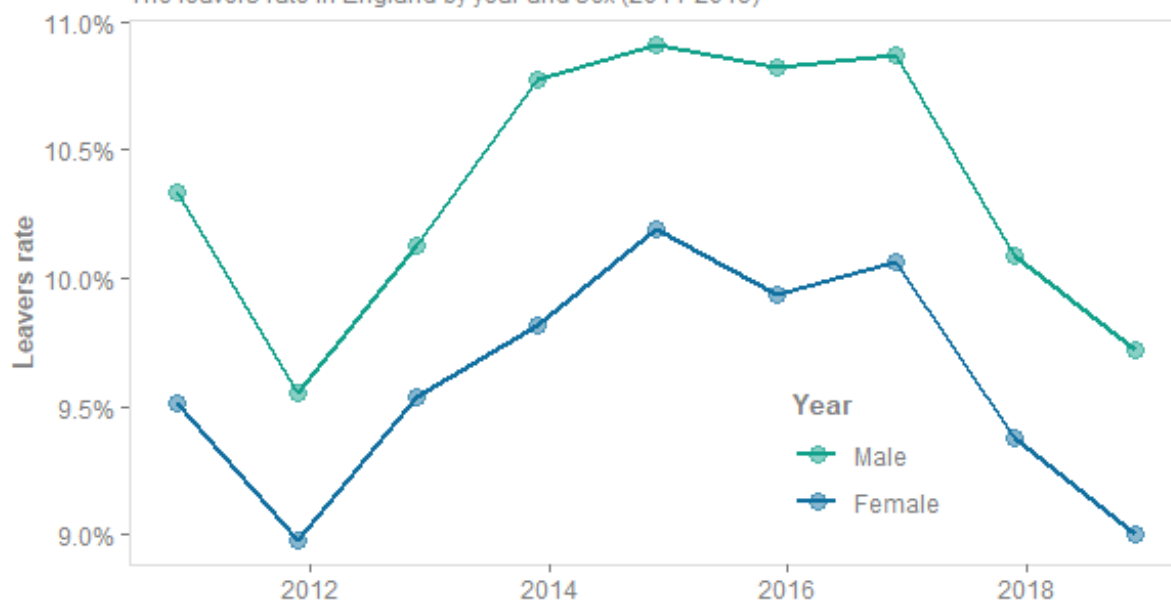
Source: UCAS

Note: We use the latest available data for 2020 (Sep) but the round is ongoing and subject to change.

Men are also more likely to leave the profession. In recent years 10.6 per cent of male teachers have quit each year, compared to 9.8 per cent of female teachers.

## Men are more likely to leave teaching

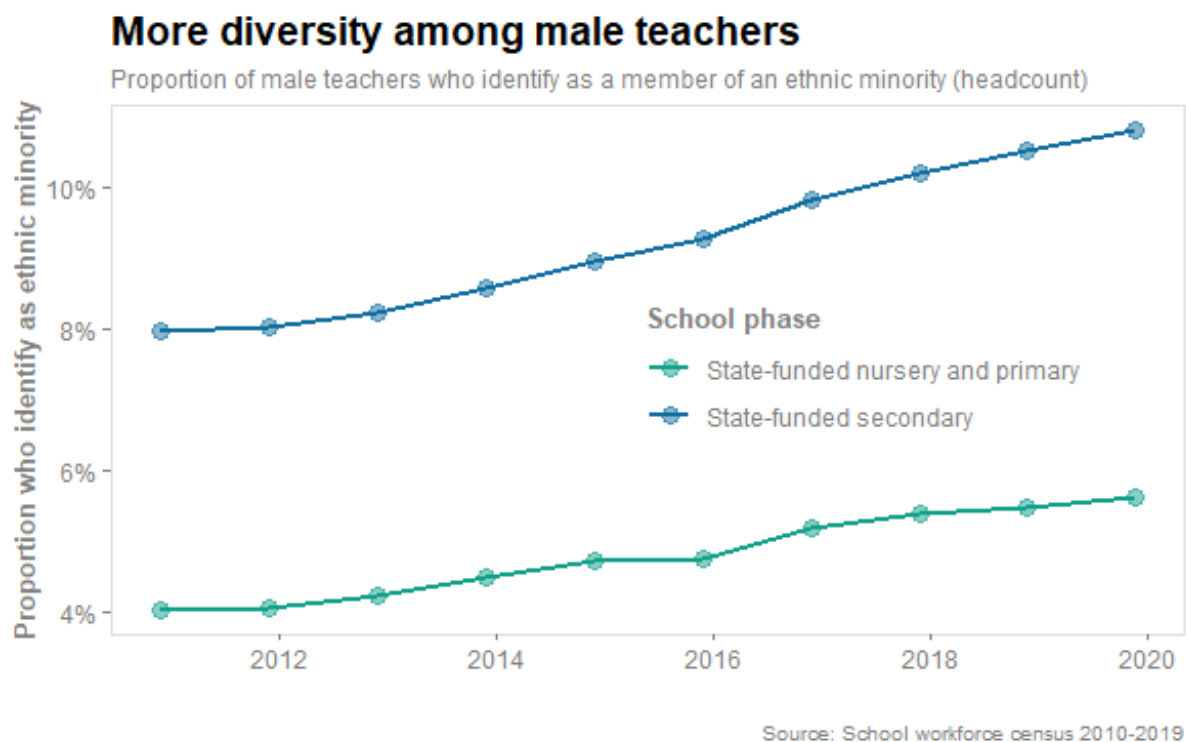
The leavers rate in England by year and sex (2011-2019)



Source: School workforce census 2010-2019

Note: The leavers rate is the FTE total of teacher leavers as a proportion of the total number in service (FTE) at the end of the year

The good news is that there has been an increase in the proportion of male teacher from BME backgrounds. Since 2010 the proportion of male teachers from a BME background has increased in both primary schools (by 1.6 percentage points) and secondary schools (by 2.8 percentage points). Consequently, the proportion of men in the school workforce from a BME background in 2019 (9.1 per cent) is gradually becoming more representative of the population (14 per cent) although there is still some way to go. Evidence from the US found that students who had “a teacher like me” (sharing the same race, ethnicity and/or gender) typically achieved higher learning outcomes (Dee 2005).



This does mean that the fall in the number of male teachers has been driven by white males. Indeed, the number of white male secondary school teachers has fallen by over 12,800 since 2010, a fall of 17 per cent. This is an important consideration in areas where there is a prevalence of underperforming white working-class boys (Hermann 2017).

We also know that, despite the surge in applications, subject-specific shortages in physics and maths are likely to persist (Fullard 2018). In the short term if policymakers want to meet recruitment targets in subjects such as physics and maths, they are likely to need to recruit more men because the pool of potential subject specific teachers is predominantly male. For example, male graduates outnumber female graduates in physics 4 to 1 and maths 2 to 1.

In line with empirical evidence EPI has recommended that top up payments should continue be made to maths and physics teachers in the most disadvantaged areas to recruit and retain subject specialist teachers where they are most needed. Such payments are likely to attract both more men and women into teaching in shortage subjects (Sibieta 2018). However, given that the pool of graduates for such subjects is predominantly male, it is important to understand the root cause of why more male graduates don't choose teaching.

With all of this in mind policymakers should:

- i) Not be complacent about the surge in teacher numbers. The Covid-19 boost is only likely to be short term and is unlikely to plug subject specific shortages.
- ii) Ensure that there is gender and ethnic diversity at different levels of seniority as well as amongst different communities.
- iii) Focus on the pipeline of teachers. While we do want to attract more men into the profession, we equally want more girls and women to study STEM subjects to address pay disparities, not just in teaching, but across the labour market in general.

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